

Howard County Consumer Affairs Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes for May 6, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm (by Felicia West, appointed by acclamation of members present)

- Present: Ashlyn Hood, Katherine Bronstein, Sue Rogan, Felicia West & Jill Bussey
- Absent: Richard Green & Jerome Jackson

Minutes of the April 1, 2015 meeting were approved as read.

Administrator's Report

Becky provided the Board with a summary of significant consumer legislation passed by the 2015 General Assembly:

Budget Discussion

Becky provided the Board with samples of promotional items to look at including: stylus pens, smart phone screen cleaners, and smart phone pockets. The Board was most interested in the stylus pens given the low cost but was interested in other styles – with the stylus on the top instead of bottom on the barrel and/or with a harder stylus for easier use. Becky will obtain more samples for next meeting and find out if there is a choice of blue or black ink. A decision must be made at the June meeting so that funds can be expended in the 2015 fiscal year.

Discussion of Advisory Board Project

The Board continued its discussion of ideas for an event or project that would coincide with National Consumer Protection Week next March or another event at which OCA plays a prominent role.

At the last meeting the Board discussed an education campaign related to spot delivery of motor vehicles. While an important topic, the Board did not believe that an event on this topic would draw a sizable audience.

The Board also discussed in April, partnering with other organizations, including the Howard County School System, on a project aimed at educating parents about cyber security issues affecting children. Jill noted, however, that the Office of Children's Services is holding an event on this issue on May 13 so an OCA event may be redundant. Becky said that she would find out more about this event and the possibility of partnering with OCS on future efforts involving kids and cyber security.

New topics:

- Financial education
 - Generally
 - For new immigrants who are unfamiliar with banking products. The Board could partner with faith based organizations with large immigrant populations. Board members could each go to service to discuss issue on the same weekend.
 - Student loans and preparing for college / independent living
 - Paying for college – aimed at young adults who are currently working but want to go (or go back) to college now. Possibly partner with Howard Community College.
- Privacy, ID theft, big data (not just aimed at parents)

Board members are to consider these projects and bring any other ideas for discussion at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD WILL BE ON JUNE 3 AT 7:00 P.M.
OFFICE OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS CONFERENCE ROOM
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